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OLD PAINTINGS FROM CHINA

The singular charm which some people discover in ancient pictures by Chinese masters, after the oddity has worn off through familiarity with them, is exerted by a goodly number of the paintings on paper and silk collected by Mr. Edgar Pierce Allen, an American lawyer who has been practising his profession in Tientsin since 1900. His pictures and miniatures may be seen at the Herter Looms. The largest is a big unframed picture, a large kakemono of a mythological subject painted by Huang Yintang under Shun Chih, the first emperor of the Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1662). On the left an Immortal stands upon a sea of clouds in a romantic yet conventional landscape of rocks, gnarled old trees, hills and lakes. She is a goddess named Hua Sheng-Ku, a graceful figure with a fan. To the right a man of high degree receives his devotees in a grove. Very beautiful and poetic are some of these views of sylvan sports, landscapes with figures, pictures of birds; full of rollicking fun a well-composed, very lively group of old men and four boys with the "peach of fertility" elevated like a banner on a crooked staff. Some of the books are delightful specimens of handiwork, big and beautiful manuscripts with pictures, and a text in which each Chinese character is a minim work of art.

SAN FRANCISCO ART PALACE

It is now definitely assured that San Francisco is to keep as a permanency the Palace of the Fine Arts which was part of the Panama-Pacific Exposition. The Art Association has taken over the building and will conduct it as a museum and gallery of the fine arts, proposing to raise a fund of several millions for its management and upkeep. Since the Exposition closed the exhibits in the Palace have been so well patronized by the public that the objections made to the locality seem to have been removed. In any case the grounds about it are to be cleared and laid out for a residential quarter with ample restrictions, in which this prize structure of the whole Exposition will be the center of interest. There was at one time a possibility that factories and tenement houses would occupy the site, but this is no longer feared. The building will be used for exhibitions of painting, sculpture and industrial arts, for concerts, meetings of musical societies and lectures on the arts, beside housing the permanent objects of the Museum of Fine Arts. While it was hoped that the Palace of Art of the Exposition would revert to the city after the fair was over, there was no certainty about it. The transfer of property seems to clinch the matter.

EXHIBITS—VARIOUS

December has been a very look-alive month in the way of art exhibits at the public galleries, at those of art dealers and in clubs, not to speak of the stations of the elevated and underground railways, which have been selected by one wide-awake sculptor as the proper places in which to advertise by large placards the latest of his statues. The artists are coming on. No shy sequestered violets found in some of them, no bashful waiting for applause, but the big colored placard outside the tent, the drum and

the barker to call the crowd! No shyness about writing his own eulogy for the public prints—everything Parisian and up to date!

Many artists having a slender baggage in the way of education to begin with proceed to Europe at an early age and live there during their formative years. Perhaps the art schools they find there are more thorough than those at home; certainly they drop into an atmosphere charged with zeal and partisanship with respect to art—that makes for enthusiasm. On the other hand there is a seamy side, because insensibly, being ignorant and young, they imbibe the prejudices and misconceptions of the ignorant foreigners among whom their lot is cast. Now among these misconceptions are many that refer to Americans. Foreigners believe that money-chasing and boastfulness and self-advertising are the rule in this country and for the most part the students from this side know too little about their own land to refute them. We may try to explain this unattractive example of placards and self-advertisement on the ground of ignorance produced by too long a stay abroad.

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The Arts Club has held its very practical and convenient gathering of the most decorative books published for the season and then the exhibit of the National Society of Craftsmen, the eleventh annual. At present the galleries are filled with a varied and attractive loan exhibit, paintings and sculptures by members of the club. In February they will contain the exhibit of the American Water-Color Society. The Century, Lotos and Union League, the MacDowell and Cosmopolitan clubs have had their share. At the Public Library a very noteworthy display of prints and books having to do with the drama is running side by side with another show, that recalling the work of the old English collector of ocean travels, Hackluyt.

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In Edmond Dulac, whose colored drawings appeared in the Scott and Fowles gallery a little before Christmas, we have a talented Frenchman with a keen sense of the good points in old Persian miniature work as well as in Aubrey Beardsley and Arthur Rackham. He is an eclectic well equipped as an illustrator of *The Thousand and One Nights*; for he manages Afreets and ghouls with a fine feeling for the terrific. Japanese and Hindoo suggestions are not lacking. Some of his Biblical or religious pictures exhibit an uncommon breadth and simplicity of composition; they possess to a very remarkable degree the very quality which James Tissot, for example, conspicuously lacked—a feeling of reverence if not exactly of awe. This versatility in Dulac is somewhat bewildering. It is understood that we owe the treat to the taste of Mr. Martin Birnbaum, until recently manager of the Berlin Photographic Gallery in New York. To a fine feeling for composition and mass-balance Dulac adds an unusually attractive sense for color. Apparently he has not obtained a mere *succès d'estime*, for the clever and fantastic little creations have found plenty of buyers. Like Bakst this versatile artist would be a capital hand to design robes and decorations for pageants and spectacular plays.